Labor growth could keep

More people are working or looking for work, according to jobs report

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USA TODAY

For investors, it doesn't get much better than Friday's employment report, which featured healthy job growth and an expanding labor force that could keep the Federal Reserve on hold longer.

All eyes were trained on the 215,000 jobs employers added, highlighting a labor market that continues to defy a sluggish economy both in the USA and overseas.

The even more compelling development was another rise in the labor force participation rate — the share of the population working or looking for jobs — to 63% from 62.9%. More impressive is that the rate is up from 62.4% in September. This after it had steadily fallen from 66% since the recession in 2007-09 as Baby Boomers retired and others enrolled in school, went on disability, hung it up early or just dropped out in the face of a brutal job market.



JUSTIN SULLIVAN, GETTY

Americans are being drawn back to a vibrant labor market.

Strong job growth and a falling unemployment rate — 5%, down from 10% in 2009 — have lured many of those on the sidelines back into a more vibrant marketplace. The low jobless rate means there are fewer available workers, so many employers are raising pay or being less selective in their hiring decisions. That has been a big positive for less educated workers, who have driven the surge in participation.

The swelling labor force "is a vote of confidence on the part of

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Fed on hold


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